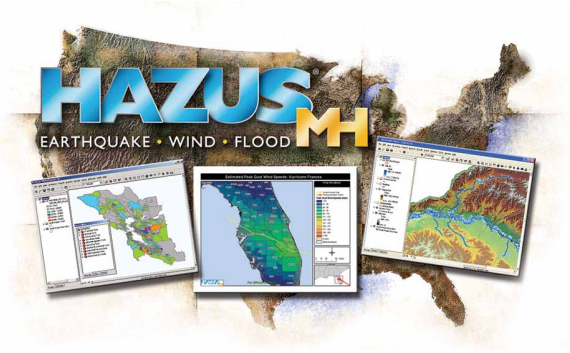
HAZUS User Group Success Story

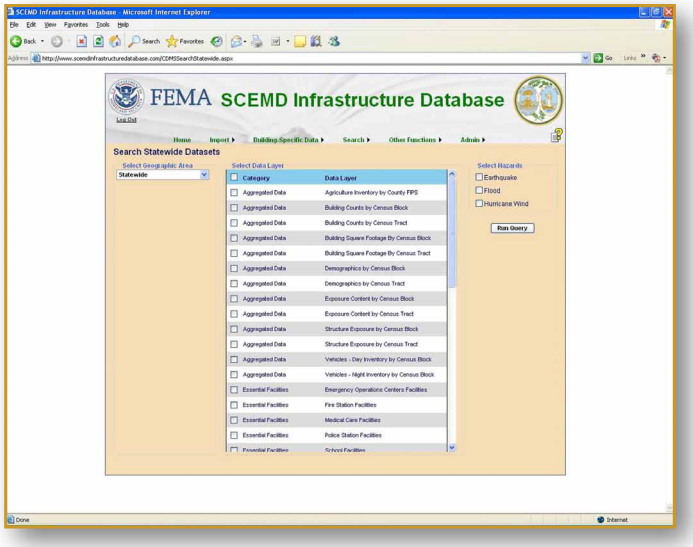
South Carolina HAZUS User Group Develops from the Successful CDMS Web Portal Project



South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) Risk Assessment Coordinator Melissa Berry used the momentum from the Comprehensive Data Management System (CDMS) Web Portal project to form the South Carolina HAZUS User Group (SCHUG) in October 2008. HAZUS User Groups are public-private partnerships formed for the purpose of using HAZUS-MH as a catalyst to advance emergency management in public and private sectors. The SCHUG will increase the coordination and collaboration between statewide emergency managers, GIS users, and educational institutions in the State of South Carolina.

To develop the SCHUG, Ms. Berry contacted all forty-six counties in South Carolina as well as the individuals participating in the CDMS Web Portal project and those in South Carolina who have been trained in HAZUS-MH. Ms. Berry introduced them to the HAZUS User Group concept and encouraged their participation in the SCHUG.

The mission of the SCHUG is to use the HAZUS-MH software to reduce the loss of life and property caused by natural and technological hazards in South Carolina through its implementation into the preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation stages of emergency management.



This is the search screen for the statewide dataset. On this page you can choose any set of aggregated data, essential facility, high potential loss facility, transportation and utility system, to search.

SCHUG Goals

The SCHUG has four goals to achieve its mission. Each of these goals coincides with the CDMS Web Portal Project. The four SCHUG goals:

Goal 1: Develop partnerships with all counties in South Carolina, the University of South Carolina, the College of Charleston, and other state agencies.
The SCHUG holds monthly conference calls and semi-annual HAZUS-MH workshops and training courses.

Goal 2: Improve HAZUS-MH loss-estimation and risk assessment through the statewide use of the CDMS Web Portal.
With support from FEMA, SCEMD with leadership from Ms. Berry created a Web Portal that allows multiple users to access the CDMS software online. CDMS is a complimentary tool to HAZUS-MH MR3 that provides users with the ability to update and manage statewide datasets, which are currently used to support analysis in HAZUS-MH. The CDMS Web Portal enables users to import and manage large HAZUS-MH datasets through the Web with an Internet browser and Microsoft® Excel® or Microsoft® Access®.

South Carolina is the first state in the nation to implement the Web-based CDMS tool. Ms. Berry conducted several outreach initiatives, including multiple presentations on HAZUS-MH and integrating its capabilities into all aspects of emergency management. She has also promoted the benefits of using the CDMS Web Portal to increase the accuracy of hazard risk assessments.

Meeting between the leaders of the South Carolina CDMS Web Portal pilot program. Representatives are from FEMA, SCEMD Mitigation and Risk Assessment, the POLIS Center, and PBS&J.

During the preliminary phase of the Web Portal project, SCEMD hosted several training courses around the state for county emergency managers and GIS coordinators who would be participating in the project. The course participants were taught how to navigate through the CDMS Web Portal interface, query the database, and upload updated information into the CDMS. The second phase focused on gaining statewide support for the project, followed by the actual update of the HAZUS data.

SCEMD asked all 46 counties in South Carolina to update the five essential facilities (Emergency Operations Centers [EOCs], police stations, fire stations, medical centers, and schools) in HAZUS-MH through the CDMS Web Portal. By using CDMS, SCEMD can update the entire HAZUS-MH database to foster Level 2 HAZUS-MH analysis at both the state and local levels. All of the county emergency managers have been included in this project, as well as many of the county GIS coordinators. This data permits State GIS professionals to perform improved hazard risk assessments for use in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

Goal 3: Continue to increase the quality of loss estimation and hazard data in South Carolina.

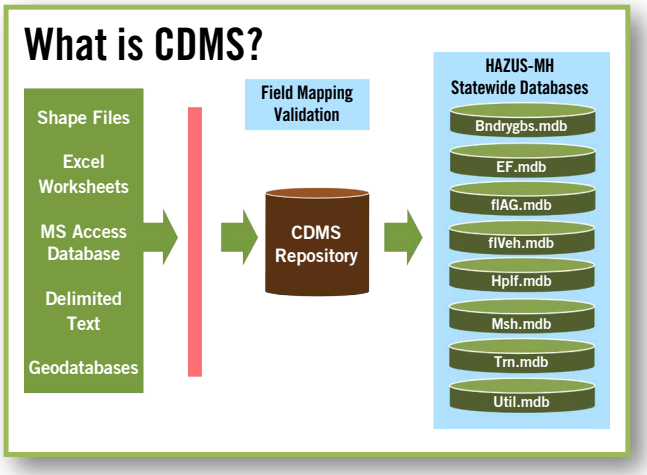
Union County was the first county in South Carolina to update all its essential facility layers with the most current local data. Credit for this goes to Linda Mitchell, Union County E-911 coordinator, and Steve Jones, Union County Emergency Services Director, for their support.

Goal 4: Share project success nationwide.

Through outreach pieces such as this success story, the SCHUG webpage and GIS and emergency management conference participation, the SCHUG members share their success nationwide. Ms. Berry has delivered several HAZUS-MH presentations in an effort to establish new contacts for the SCHUG at training and conference events.

Future of the SCHUG

Ms. Berry intends for the SCHUG to create a network of HAZUS-MH users and hazard professionals that can be used as a resource for troubleshooting, performing improved risk assessments, and eventually running HAZUS-MH Level 3 risk analysis. Ms. Berry knows that unifying the resources and expertise in South Carolina will improve emergency management and risk assessments in the state. In the future, Ms. Berry will provide additional basic HAZUS-MH and CDMS training across the state.



CDMS Web Portal Features

Little software is required, with no installation requirements, which will facilitate expansion of the user database.

The CDMS Web Portal enables the user to upload and download the datasets that are available on the CDMS desktop version, including site specific inventory (e.g., essential facilities), general building stock, and building specific data.

A role-based security system is used, which enables the administrator to assign roles and responsibilities to users, and thus limit user access to the database (for example, the user can be assigned rights to update all essential facilities; all essential facilities in a single county; or multiple combinations).

Contact

Melissa Berry
Risk Assessment Coordinator
CDMS Web Portal Administrator
South Carolina Emergency Management Division
2779 Fish Hatchery Road
West Columbia, SC 29172
Phone: 803.737.8856
E-mail: mberry@emd.sc.gov

User of the Year

FEMA awarded Melissa Berry the 2008 4th Quarter HAZUS User of the Year award for spearheading the national pilot project for the CDMS Web Portal and for forming the South Carolina HAZUS User Group.

Resources

South Carolina HAZUS User Group (SCHUG)
http://www.usehazus.com/schug

SCEMD CDMS Web Portal
http://www.scemdinfrastructuredatabase.com